

Shampoo Mythology :

the object, its meaning, its influences

by

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Anna. Phillips. 26th January, 1997.

The artist would genuinely like to give
thanks to the following people for their
support and assistance

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Abstract

This thesis begins by examining the proposition that advertising appropriates symbolic, historical, and religious mythologies related to hair (head-hair being just one of our material culture definitions of the feminine) and then re-invests this signification and iconography into the shampoo bottle and its contents. The investigation considers the symbolic origins and relationships between hair, plastic and shampoo. Within the design and construction of the shampoo bottle's form- opalescent coated and soft feminised designs; its contents- thick, wholesome and creamy liquids; and its written text- didactic instructions and soothing reassurances, are unspoken messages designed not only to reinforce attitudes about hygiene and acceptable cleanliness levels but equally to act as signifiers related to identity, social position and confinement.

The art objects incorporate familiar discarded plastic, such as early domestic Tupperware, and more recently plastic shampoo and conditioner bottles. Consumption of these objects is based upon the societal beliefs and myth with which they are imbued.¹ Pastel-shaded Tupperware exemplifies feelings about the nuclear Anglo-Saxon family – movable, stackable and disposable. adhering to the values of consumption and modernity.

There is a celebratory aspect to these mass-produced consumer items, something which Roland Barthes identified when he wrote of the magical properties of plastic: 'Plastic can be jewels as well as buckets.'²

The thesis explores, this 'misunderstood' medium. Plastic is investigated as a 'wonder' medium - transformed from its utilitarian beginnings and status. I have created works of a celebratory nature which examine its lyrical mythical potential as well as its utilitarian function. The sculptural works explore how plastic and hair have common concerns with artifice and appearance. Shampoo bottle text makes constant reference to the word 'natural'. Plastic is a polymer that established its identity as an imitator of the 'natural'. I have identified five 'types' of shampoo and conditioner bottles, aimed at stereo-typical representations of women and their defined environments. I see the plastic shampoo bottle as an object of desire.

'Shampoo Mythology' constantly refers to the 'Ultra Body'. An unending quest for the Ultra Body in our material culture has materialised because of the insistence of idealised visions of women, resulting in ceaseless dissection and fragmentation of the body from the self.

¹ Barthes, R. Mythologies (trans. Lavers, A)
Paladin Press, 1972, p.153.

² Barthes, R. 1972, p. 97.

'Shampoo Mythology' is a deliberate construction of the mystique and spectacle of an object, the plastic shampoo bottle; a mythology which far surpasses the consequences and limitations of the object's intended function as a hair cleaner.

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Introduction

I have always been fascinated by bathrooms and their contents. Germs and deodorants. Leaking body fluids and embarrassing odours. I could distinguish fresh *Lavendola* or *Harpic* the instant it had been poured. The locked bathroom door enthralled me. I noticed soggy cold washers left limp, abandoned by their owners. I noticed bars of white soaps magically transform into slimy aquatic beings when submerged, only to become cracked and ageing when left high and dry. Bathroom tiles and grout lines appeared like modernist maps, which I'd trace with my finger, outlining the contours of bathroom boundaries and control, similar to the boundaries defining the feminine and the methods enforcing those controls, (see illustration no. 1). This fascination with the bathroom and its significance coalesced into a particular obsession with the plastic shampoo bottle and its contents.

My early relationship with the shampoo bottle arose out of my admiration for its form and colour. After having held a near-empty plastic shampoo bottle up to the light whilst checking for content level, I discovered the most beautiful electric blue. It was *Finesse Ultra Body*, manufactured by Helene Curtis. On another occasion, feeling particularly despondent, I upended a shampoo bottle to read, in a type of impressed braille, the letters H.D.P.E, which stand for High Density Polyethylene. I misread this as HOPE. I thought I was saved. On reflection this misunderstanding was probably responsible for my examination of iconographic symbols, religious myths and secular stories.

A special deodorant

—when a girl needs protection most



Women use the special deodorant QUEST to destroy odors on sanitary napkins. But women also have a day in, day out problem that calls for QUEST where underarm deodorants aren't suitable and may be unsafe.

For intimate daily use QUEST is gentle, bland—non-irritating to sensitive tissues. QUEST contains a most effective deodorizer that clings and protects for hours.

For use on sanitary napkins, QUEST is soft, absorbent. It is drying—relieves irritation, chafing and itching. And it's neat to use. Use QUEST before going out—on certain days and every day—at all drug and toiletry counters.

Illustration no. 1.

'A special deodorant'
Womens Realm, 1958.
England

Roland Barthes suggested in *Mythologies*, in a chapter entitled, 'Soap Powders and Detergents', that one could do well to study the psycho-analysis of various domestic purifying fluids. Disinfectant, he believed, is indiscriminate; it 'kills the dirt'¹. Its acids burn. Detergents, on the other hand, are selective. They push and pummel, driving out dirt, maintaining public order and upholding standards of social decency. Barthes maintained that detergents involve the consumer in a kind of direct experience of the substance, making them an accomplice of a liberation rather than the mere beneficiary of a result.

Shampoo is classified as a type of detergent, but its significance goes well beyond its chemical components. Shampoo advertising appropriates a wide range of images and associations connected to secular, historical and religious myth, head hair mythology, fables and fairy stories, scientific sounding explanations and rationale, depictions of women throughout art history and depictions of patriarchal family values. The use of such imagery is deliberately presented to uphold and reinforce certain stereotypical representations of women, and to normalise constructed attributes of femininity, so that acceptable gender behaviour is maintained and insidious social controls and artificially constructed levels of cleanliness and hygiene are upheld.

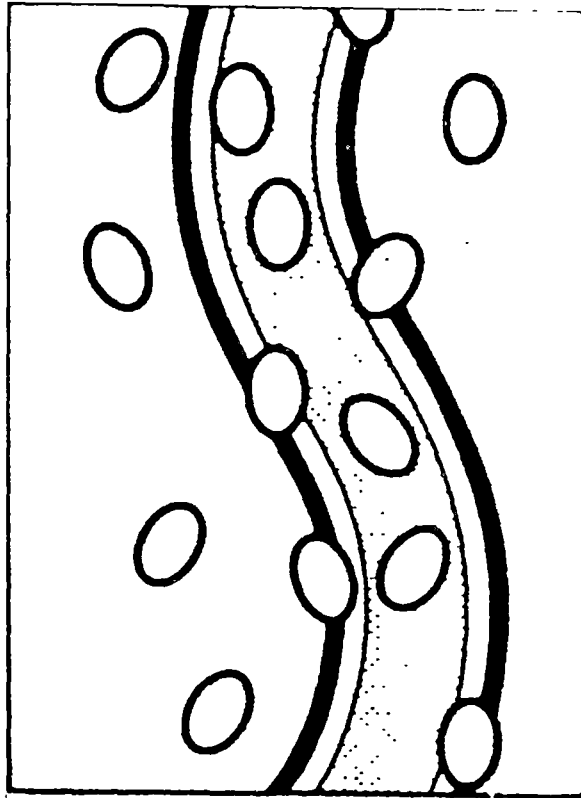
Displayed in pearlescent avenues, plastic shampoo bottles posture and pretend, their shiny synthetic skins stand taut and full. They wait, resting on another's shoulders for the consumer, who must make a choice. This choice is influenced by the powers and dictates of the material culture that the consumer inhabits. It is a choice that relies on past symbolic associations, a choice that identifies with the familiar and the acceptable, inscribed within the properties of a contemporary material object.

As Barthes says of detergents, 'Behind the enchanting display of a substance at once deep and airy, having the ability to transform itself without damaging its surrounding forms,²' lies a mythology, deliberately invented. In the case of shampoo especially, this mythology far surpasses the consequences and limitations of its function as a hair cleaner. Shampoo has been mythologised into a

¹ Barthes, R., 'Soap Powders and Detergents', *Mythologies*,
(trans. Lavers, A), London, Paladin Press, 1972 ed. p. 36.

² *ibid*

constructed package of pleasurable experiences, and adjectives of indefinable 'wonderfulness': silk, gloss, volume, fibre-enhancing and body. All of these qualities are invested upon the consumer's inner being. Hidden behind the image of the luxuriant, lather-headed bath dweller lies the true intent of shampoo mythology: to disguise the chemical truths and contra-indications of a detergent in an air filled sac. The consumer, having decided which shampoo to purchase, allow themselves to enter a relationship that implies a trusting, if imbalanced, intimacy. Like detergent, whose action impregnates the matrix of cloth, shampoo (as the advertising suggests) 'gets in deep' into the consumer's hair (see illustration no. 2). Emulsification signifies a soothing, balm-like experience, 'anointing' its purifying properties, on what the ancient Greeks regarded as the seat of life: the head. Together, the bottle's text implies, the shampoo and the consumer can overcome undesirable personal qualities. The consumer once freed from the damning visibility of grease can look forward to the 'envious looks' of others. In this written component of my thesis I will be discussing the methods and reference systems employed by shampoo manufacturers in the advertising and promotion of their product, with particular attention to how the plastic shampoo bottle appropriates its imagery, presentation and references and acts as a contemporary talisman.



*Agree liposomes
penetrate the hair shaft.*

Illustration no. 2 : Agree Shampoo Liposomes penetrating
the hair shaft.

I will now outline the chief areas of research that I intend to discuss in this paper. My initial attempts at collecting and storage of bottles led to the discovery that plastic shampoo bottles are manufactured in certain 'types'. I then present an overview of the social history of shampoo and its origins. Armed with this information, I then explore the symbolic importance and mythologising of feminine head-hair. As I was researching shampoo, it occurred to me that apart from its intended use as hair cleaner, shampoo also functions at mythological levels, in providing a representation that can be manipulated and used as a sign. A sign that silicates rewards and offers of satisfaction, at the same time as being an instrument of repression and control.

I examined the molecular and chemical formulations of detergents, listing both the chemical and symbolic properties that enhance the magical transformative status of shampoo. I discuss the symbolic importance and ideologies associated with head-hair and discuss how shampoo advertising has appropriated classical and contemporary imagery of women, acting as a reinforcer of traditional values for women and levels of hygiene. I refer to a typology of shampoo bottles, giving examples of my sculptures as expressions of each type. I juxtapose the properties of the plastic shampoo bottle against those of hair and discuss some of the paradoxical commonalities they share concerning artifice and appearance. I refer to artists and writers who have informed me throughout the paper. I conclude, by referring to the wonder properties of plastic and its potential.

Quest, seemed an appropriate name for the first piece of sculpture I completed. A good place to start. Thinking and plotting whilst ripping up and gluing bits of paper together. I was on a quest. A type of art explorer. I was going to take nothing for granted. Everything was going to be squeaky clean after I had finished with it. Years of seeking out friends bathroom cabinets was about to pay dividends. *Quest* had become a sign, more than just a reference to how I felt about the medium of plastic. Released from its previous conservative iconography, it now signified an attitude of celebratory and optimistic potential. As Barthes said, 'plastic can be jewels as well as buckets'.³

³ Barthes, R., 1972, p. 153.

Methodology

So, how has a foam boosted surfactant (detergent) contained within a pearlised plastic amphora (shampoo bottle), whose major function is to remove grease (sebum build-up) from the hair shaft and scalp bed, acquired and maintained its mythology, its believability, and its significance?

Where to start investigations, with so many questions? I seemed to be on a downhill cross-country skiing course, whizzing past academic theories and ideologies related to advertising, Marxism, sexuality, feminist theories, the body, psychoanalysis, anatomy and physiology, depictions of women in art history, the *fin de siècle*, 19th century French poets, and their obsession with long hair, chemical analysis and decoding; symbology, religious iconography, semiotics, myth. It was all starting to get out of hand. A specific concern with the objecthood of the bottle emerged.

I set out to investigate why buyers of shampoo willingly identify and comply with the demands of the shampoo bottle. I had a hunch that the shampoo bottle incorporates iconic significance into its physical being. The elegance of its form is appealing, enticing and compelling. The written text on the bottle is often worded in a pseudo-scientific vernacular which exists largely unopposed and obscure to its users.

I have categorised in sequential sections of my paper, the concerns and findings that I have identified in my research. I have collected and collated information from a wide range of mediums and sources. I have corresponded with multi-national chemical companies, who have given me invaluable research material. Answering an advertisement in a local paper, I was given a 27 year old collection of Avon catalogues and assorted papers by a retiring company representative. I have filled nearly 10 scrap books full of advertising imagery, art depictions and literary references. I have avidly read popular culture magazines from the start of the nineteen twenties to contemporary weekly issues, cutting out advertisements, from charming depictions of middle class women to the more bullying and subliminally loaded type that we are used to in contemporary women's magazines. (see illustration no. 3)

**"No other shampoo leaves your hair
so glamorous yet so easy to manage"**

agrees

Margaret Lockwood

Starring in
"Jassy"

"Thrilling new highlights sparkle in my hair after a Drene Shampoo," says beautiful Margaret Lockwood. And *your* hair will shine with a new glamour, too, if you follow the lead of the Stars, and regularly use Drene Shampoo. Drene also leaves your hair easier to set, right after the shampoo. It is simple to use and absolutely safe. It *cannot* harm the hair or scalp. Remember, Drene is most economical — goes twice as far. Buy a larger size and save money.



THOMAS HEDLEY AND COMPANY LIMITED, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE

Illustration no. 3:

Shampoo advertisement
Womans Realm, 1943.
England.

I have documented the following methodologies into separate sections of my paper.

Collection Strategies

Sorting and Typifying

A History of Shampoo

The Chemical Properties of Shampoo

Hair Mythology and Visions of Femininity

The Transformative Properties of a Successful Shampoo

Typology of Plastic Shampoo Bottles

Language in shampoo advertising appears to have been re-invented, with 'new improved' meaning. Within the design and construction of the shampoo bottles - their opalescence and soft feminised designs, their contents, thick, creamy and wholesome; their instructions - are soothing reassurances or scolding self-righteousness.

By comparing the mythological signification of head hair, anatomy and physiology of the scalp and hair bed against my findings concerning the plastic shampoo bottle, I discovered that the plastic shampoo bottle is invested with both head hair mythology and scientific rationale.

My aim has been to demystify the belief systems inherent in these forms, and to expose how shampoo advertising re-invests mythological powers into the product. I have referred to my sculptures as visual representations of my discoveries.

Collection Strategies: Depots and Storage

Before I began creating my sculptures, I realised that I was going to need hundreds of empty plastic shampoo bottles. Solving the dilemma of collecting in a sense was instrumental in my understanding of the mysteries of Shampoo Mythology. I envisioned sculptural pieces that would take on the persona and signifying powers of the plastic shampoo bottle, forms invested with iconographic potential. I saw cut-up pieces of bottle flowing in colourful mosaic patterns. I saw strands of plastic fibre capable of

being yanked round and round a crochet hook, emerging as a new potential being. In other words, big.

At first I asked friends. I invaded their bathrooms, decanting half-empty bottles into cups. I instructed deputies at health and fitness centres to rummage in sweaty cubicles. That source was not enough. My need for bottles was insatiable. I decided to collect empty shampoo and conditioner bottles at the Hobart School of Art which I attended as a full-time student. After reading Joanne Williamson text, *De-coding Advertisements* which refers to referent systems that advertising employs,⁴ I decided that the empty shampoo collection box I was making, would be imbued with the seductive properties of the shampoo bottles that I was hoping to collect. The empty shampoo and conditioner depot was very successful. In an 18 month period, the collection box evolved through three presentation 'looks'. Commencing as the *Natural White empty Shampoo and Conditioner "Depot"*, I had observed a 'Swiss Vitamin Institute' insignia on the Pantene Pro-V bottle. (see illustration no.4) This cross insignia signifies a type of clinical sterility, free of contaminants and microbes signified with pseudo-medical legitimacy and authority. I gave the *Natural White Depot* a complete 'make-over' after about three months, transforming it into, *The Deluxe Empty Shampoo and Conditioner Depot*. It had 1950s pearly pink with gold trim.

The *Deluxe Empty Shampoo and Conditioner Depot* finally matured into a deep sea blue with silver splash trim, called *Plunge*. References to the sea, with its cleansing foaming associations are constant in shampoo bottle presentation.

I received hundreds of empty bottles, and a few letters from shampoo bottles ex-owners. Occasionally, their hairs got left behind. Stuck on, or jammed in the flip-top lid. I often wondered about the identity of these anonymous offerings and their lost mythological powers.

⁴ Williamson, J., *De-coding Advertisements*, Ideology and Meaning in Advertising, 1978, p. 165.

PANTENE
PRO-V

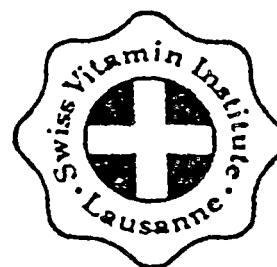


Illustration no. 4: "Swiss Vitamin Institute" Insignia from
Pantene Pro-V Bottles

Sorting and Typifying

Collecting is one thing, storage is quite another. It was whilst sorting and stacking the bottles that I really got to know my topic. Colour was an obvious form of identification, so categorisation was initially colour-coded. White, was the most predominant bottle in my total collection. The soft yielding plastic resplendent in pastel shades, emanated “feminised” flowery odours, deodorising my studio, creating lasting impressions on visitors. I could even distinguish shampoo by odour, soon being able to identify type, by just smelling newly washed hair.

The plastic shampoo bottle comes in certain “types”. Shampoo is currently categorised according to hair condition, for example, *Else've Everyday wash for Fine Hair* manufactured by L'OREAL or *Extra Bounce for Damaged and Treated Hair* manufactured by Wella. However, simultaneous to this overt reference system, there exists another method of categorisation, complete with other layers of meaning. Joanne Williamson⁵ also suggests that advertising itself, sets up connections between objects and certain types of people. Consumers identify with a product, that has become ‘personalised’, identifying with the signified properties of the shampoo, such as freedom, individuality, panache and style. For example, *Wella Balsam* manufactured by Wella is an example of this phenomena where consumers are identified and measured against a product,

“you can tell a Wella women by the way she wears her hair.”

Common themes concerning cleanliness and manageability can be observed in all bottle types. However, I began to see patterns in the motifs, imagery and texts. References to water, fluidity and containment were reflected in imagery associated with drops, splashes, spray and spurts, frosted shell and classical cornucopia shapes, the Cameo insignia and representations of the Greek mythological creature, the Uroborus, a snake eating its tail. Second-level messages are also evident in the seductive glamour of the bottle's appearance and packaging.

The types of plastic shampoo bottles that I have identified are constructed appropriations of associations and experiences defining a ‘type’ of women.

⁵ Williamson, J., *De-Coding Advertisements*, 1978, p. 99.

- 1) The Virtuous Bottle
- 2) The Femme-Fatale bottle
- 3) The Natural Bottle - which can be divided into the, Earth Goddess Bottle and the Sea Goddess Bottle
- 4) The Scientific/ Mechanical Bottle
- 5) The "No-Frills" Bottle, also referred to as the Victim/Martyr Bottle.

Receiving so many white bottles from the collection depot, I horizontally stacked them in boxes. I pondered over this colour's popularity. White, having the material properties of sterility and efficiency, adds a certain credibility to shampoo's claim as a hair cleaner. I see a relationship between certain aspects of Judao-Christian use of colour symbology and the use of colour in Shampoo Mythology. The most likely colour for a shampoo bottle is white, with streaks of blue and flicks of gold. It is no coincidence that the colours of the Virgin Mary are also white, blue and gold, signifying purity and goodness. I suspected that the use of white in shampoo bottles also had other associations. As my studio light reflected across their communal mass, I realised the potential of their frosted bodies. Connecting to the significance of the sea-shell imagery and the Classical Venus references within the design presentation of the shampoo bottles, I decided to make a sculpture that represented these feminised signifiers. The shampoo bottle medium, plastic, is my vision of the perfect skin for a contemporary Venus. My Venus, complete with sea-shell references and pockets of text inscribed upon tear shaped petals is illuminated with interior artificial light, whilst shampoo foam coats her plastic sides. (see illustration no. 5 *Venus was her name* , 1995)

Constantly picking up rolling bottles off my studio floor, victims of my collapsing storage boxes, I began to examine shampoo text and design imagery. Most bottles are either two-faced or tubular in shape. The anterior face includes the product insignia, descriptive adjectives and design swirls. On the posterior face, the shampoo

title heads another descriptive passage, addressing its unique 'wonder' properties to the beneficiaries of its consumption, whilst extolling its values and principal additives. In the following paragraph, written instructions on application and gesture occur. The next paragraph lists chemical ingredients such as the unpronounceable, Sodium Hydroxymethylglycinate, which has more letters than the alphabet combined, and yet its action and function, at the onset of my investigation, had been a total mystery to me. The final posterior paragraph is a relatively contemporary but not compulsory addition, a hair-care advice, contact number. I realised that if I was to unravel the mysteries of shampoos signification, then an understanding of shampoo history and chemical composites was essential.



Illustration no. 5 *Venus was her name* (1995)

A History of Shampoo

I wondered about hair hygiene and attitudes towards bathing in pre-shampoo days. I decided to investigate the social history of shampoo and its origins.

The earliest known record of shampoo is a reference to soap weeds used by the Egyptians. It was said they gave a good lather. The Gauls made "soap" from goat's fat and beech ash (potash) but this was only for brightening the hair. The Romans made soap from a mix of oils and sand.⁶ Hair adornment and herbal treatments for both men and women is well documented during the middle ages. Cosmetics for the face, and dyes for the hair were all common in western Europe from the 13th century. By the 14th century soap was being manufactured in England, available to the wealthy classes at the dictates of fashionability and social artifice. In the 17th century, wig-wearing was very popular for both men and women, it was the period of ultimate hair artifice.⁷ Women from the court world would spend inordinate amounts of time having their hair decorated and perfumed. Cleaning of the hair with water was not encouraged; applications of oils, perfumed waters and animal grease were preferred.

Rural populations shifted during the industrialised era of the 18th century, moving to cities, which were ill-equipped to handle large surges in population growth. Terrible outbreaks of disease and squalor occurred in the cities. Nutrition was poor, sanitation appalling. A well-placed fear of polluted waters kept people away from washing right up until the late 18th century. Hairdressers for women did not become commonplace until then.⁸ The wealthy classes however, had access to water bath therapies and European spas, but working class homes had outside bathroom and toilet facilities and were constantly exposed to deadly bacteria and viruses. Eventually, sanitation legislation and public health policies were introduced in response to alarming mortality rates, in a bid to

⁶ Wright, L., *Clean and Decent :The History of the Bathroom and the W.C.*, 1963, p. 240

⁷ Trasko, M., *Daring Do's, A history of Extraordinary Hair*, Paris, Flammarion, 1994, p. 128-29.

⁸ *ibid*

enforce improved social behaviours and attitudes towards hygiene and sanitation. (see illustration no. 6)

After the Second World War, there was a critical shortage of animal fats and vegetable oils, the basic ingredients of soap. The mineral oils found in petroleum were no use because they will not saponify (turn to soap) in the presence of caustic soda or caustic potash, the other essential ingredient for soap.⁹

HAS
DEATH
(IN A RAGE)

Been invited by the Commissioners of Common Sewers to take up his abode in Lambeth? or, from what other villanous cause proceeds the frightful Mortality by which we are surrounded?

In this Pest-House of the Metropolis, and disgrace to the Nation, the main, thoroughfares are still without Common Sewers, although the Inhabitants have paid exorbitant Rates from time immemorial!!!

"O Heaven! that such companions thou'dst unfold,
"And put in every honest hand, a whip,
"To lash the rascals naked through the world."

Unless something be speedily done to allay the growing discontent of the people, retributive justice in her salutary vengeance will commence her operations with the *Lamp-Iron* and the *Halter*.

SALUS POPULI.
Lambeth, August, 1832.

J. W. PEEL, Printer, 9, New Cut, Lambeth.

Illustration no. 6 : Hygiene and Sanitation reform poster, London, 1832, Taken from *Clean and*

Decent: The History of the Bathroom and the W.C. author Lawrence Wright.

⁹ Openshow, F., 'Detergent Action during shampooing', *Advanced Hairdressing Science*, 1981, p. 201.

Eventually the problem was solved. Chemists discovered chemicals which would saponify mineral oils, and our modern soapless detergents are the result. When my investigation into Shampoo Mythology commenced, I had no idea that I would need a basic understanding of the chemical actions of alkaline, acids and buffer composites. However, once I had grasped this empirical knowledge, not only did it increase my understanding of Shampoo Mythology, it also informed my art making. Inspired with the intricacies of micro-scopic chemical reactions and polymer chains gave me impetus to undertake quite exact, if at times very repetitive detail. Whilst making *My little ones*, (1996) I wanted to reference plastics molecular beginnings. The little ones signify a type of embryonic beginning, whose artificial light nurtures incubation.

The first mineral oil detergent was such a degreaser that a duck washed in it sank like a stone when it tried to swim. Stripped of all its lubricant and waterproofing, the duck feathers were instantly saturated with water.¹⁰

Shampoo is a direct descendant of substances developed to degrease old engines and launder mechanics' overalls.¹¹ It came into its own once manufacturers realised it could be used in hard-water locations as a hair cleaner. Consumers were delighted with the way the new soapless shampoos fluffed up into mountains of bubbles and rinsed out clean as a whistle.

Mineral based detergents, unlike soap, lather in hard-water areas. They do not combine with the salts dissolved in hard water to make a bathroom ring mark. Impressed with the success of the new product, shampoo manufacturers decided to extend its market into soft water locations. These new soapless shampoos were cheap to make and easy to sell. Shampoo, encased within its plastic container, become associated with the ideals of modernity;

¹⁰ Harry, R.G., *The Principal and Practices of Modern Cosmetics*, New York, Chemical Pub. Co. Ltd. 1962, p. 267-269.

¹¹ Franke, E., Shampoo making, choosing and using it', *Shampoo and Scirrors* Ch. 28., 1987, p. 256.

available, affordable, anonymous, sealed within an economical form, it was an object of promise. As more chemical companies entered the cosmetic industry, newer, improved versions of shampoos were continually released onto the market.

However, these new soapless shampoos were high in alkalinity, degreasing the hair to such an extent they caused damage to the hair cuticle. Ironically, this down-side of shampoo consumption became a positive for shampoo manufacturers as continual shampoo use created the need for an almost equally profitable product, the conditioner.

The importance of advertising grew in relation to the scale of consumption. Shampoo products were increasingly presented as aids to beauty and glamour, rather than just a tool for cleaning the hair. In addition to new and improved products, improved packaging and promotional advertising played an important role. Among important innovations of the last hundred years are the collapsible tube (1890), chemicals in hair waving (1920s), soapless shampoos and cold permanent wave (1930s) the aerosol container (1940s) and improved less toxic hair dyes and colourants (1950s)¹²

The repercussions and ethics of shampoo testing were sadly overlooked in shampoo's early development. Interestingly though, the basic chemical composites of shampoo have changed little since its invention.

Experiments for alkalinity and stinging were carried out on confined albino rabbits to see how caustic the new soapless shampoos were to their conjunctiva. This experiment was called the Draize test. If the slowly dripping shampoo made the albino rabbits eyes look like little cauliflowers, then the shampoo being tested, was considered too harsh for human use.¹³

The 1960s saw the arrival of the celebrity, continental, 'father-figure' hairdressers, such as Vidal Sassoon and Henri Mastey. Such hairdressers gained cult status and recognition during this period, capitalising or cashing in on their professional credentials by producing their own range of hair care products. Sassoon credits himself as being the liberator of hair styling, with what was

¹² Nault, W.H., 'History of Hairdressing' , *World Book Encyclopedia* , 1988, U.S.A

¹³ Franke, R. , 1987, p. 257.

considered at the time, radical new methods of hair styling, such as his geometric designed cuts and the wash'n'wear bob.¹⁴

Sassoon argued that his modern, new shapes allowed women's hair to be more natural and free-flowing. He called the 1960s, the era of hair revolution.¹⁵ The popularity of the musical *Hair* underscored this new doctrine of free styling, underpinning permissive notions of sexuality, nudity and the psychedelic.

Proctor and Gamble, the chemical company who manufacture Sassoon's products, explain in their consumer information sheet that shampoo has established, "a new kind of personal freedom for the consumer". This can be seen from the wide range of products available in the supermarket or hairdressing salons, state P and G.

The rhetoric that extols this personal freedom, offers little to women, who have not the money to take advantage of it, nor to enquire questioning the validity of advertising claims. Consumers' freedom is limited to types of brands available, rather than whether one should engage in this type of socially constructed behaviour in the first place.

Overcome by my findings concerning the historical origins of shampoo, I acted upon a random democratic thought, which led me straight down the path to the lion's den, so to speak.

¹⁴ Sassoon, V., *A Year of Health and Beauty*, London, Penguin, 1975, p.65.

¹⁵ Sassoon, V., 'Proctor and Gamble Consumer Information' sheet, 1994 20

The Chemical Properties of Shampoo

I wrote to fourteen shampoo and conditioner manufacturers asking for information on hair care and product information. They all wrote back to me, some with free samples. Some gave me information on how they made their shampoo. Other companies told me this was top secret information. One company told me about the importance of a good diet, and the role vitamins had in having a good head of hair. Others gave me factual accounts of the history of their company, some gave me a complete decoding to their product's chemical analysis. I have included a selection of these letters in appendix no. 1.

The Federal Bureau of Consumer Affairs, lists shampoo as a "Cosmetic product" in its detailed Ingredient Labelling of Cosmetics (Consumer Product Information Standards) Statutory Rules 1991 No. 327.¹⁶ The guidelines define a "cosmetic product" as a substance or preparation intended for placement in contact with any external part of the human body, with the view to :

- altering the odour of the body; or
- changing its appearance; or
- cleansing it; or
- maintaining it in good order; or
- protecting it; or
- perfuming it.

The above Trade Practices Act definition sounds rather severe and formal. It appears strange because advertising promotes its product to the consumer at the marketing end of the commodity exchange relationship very differently. It is interesting to note that shampoo is listed as a cosmetic rather than a hygiene product. The emotive language and the soft-focus presentation usually on offer in shampoo advertising is noticeably absent. Removed from the hype and propertied abilities, shampoo in this instance, is stripped bare of its mythologised benefits. Bound to legal definition and trade practices act, it must be decreed safe for human consumption. Once removed from consumer appraisal, the plastic shampoo bottle and its language becomes increasingly impersonal and quantifiable.

¹⁶ Aust. Gov. Pub., *Ingredient Labelling of Cosmetics*, The Federal Bureau of Consumer Affairs, Aust. Gov. Publishing service Canberra, 1991. 21

Shampooing may be as simple as just following the directions and using warm water, however, much is happening at the shampoo, grease and hair interface. (see illustration no. 7) The consumer, blind to these chemical reactions, lathers on to an inch of its foam height best.

When shampoo is first applied to wet hair surfactant molecules are in solution and are free to orientate themselves around oil particles. In this first stage of detergency, the surfactant molecules position themselves along the water and oil interface with their hydrophilic (water loving) ends pointed towards the water and their hydrophobic (water hating) ends associated with the oil droplet.¹⁷

And whilst the consumer is busy ingesting the promises of the product into their consumer psyche, the next stage of microscopic detergent emulsion continues, involving the suspension and removal of the oily dirt.

The surfactant separates the oil from the hair, whilst simultaneously surrounding and penetrating the rest of the droplet. When enough surfactant is available, the oil droplet will be completely surrounded and suspended in water. This combination of oil and surfactant is known as a micelle.¹⁸

¹⁷ Harry, R. G., *Principals and Practice of Modern Cosmetics*, New York, Chemical Pub. Co. inc., 1962, p. 188-210.

¹⁸ Harry, R.G., p. 188.



The shampoo should include a massage with dense suds. Rinse carefully with warm, clear water till your hair shines. Then you know it is absolutely clean.

Shampooing long hair is easy if you remember to work from the hairline all around your head and to the very ends of the hair. This technique helps to work out tangles—and avoids making more of them as you massage the warm lather into your scalp and hair.



A deep sink where the water runs off quickly is best for washing long hair. Most efficient, too, is the use of a spray that helps you rinse your hair much more effectively than with water poured from a cup. (Cleanliness Bureau Photos)

Illustration no. 7 :

Instructions for washing the Hair.

(Cleanliness Bureau Photograph) taken from *New Hope for Your Hair*, 1961.

It is whilst rinsing away the oil soaked micelles, sluicing away debris and disengaged hairs, that the most liberating experience for the consumer can take place. Washing away grease, the consumer partakes in a watery cathartic experience, re-investing the signified promises of the bottle. But, once again a contradiction exists, The "natural" qualities signified within the shampoo bottle, do not extend into other realities. The methods and implications of actual shampoo use and its disposal are not questioned. In other words, responsibility for the Micelles of the world, is sadly lacking. The contemporary English sculptor Haddrain Piggott observed that consumers appear unwilling to accept social and environmental responsibilities caused by individual actions, and consequently, wash their hands of the problem caused, by washing their hands¹⁹. As consumers, we are made to view body detritus and odours with anxiety as reward and status come with the approval of an appearance acceptable to others. Little consideration is given of what happens to the sullied water going down the plug hole. Rather, the dreams of the shampoo liquid, once impregnated into the physical hair, seem able to also rinse away responsibility along with user objectivity.

A "blind" product test of hundreds of shampoos was conducted by the Philip Kingsley Trichological Centre in New York (1991).²⁰ Findings from their research showed that all shampoos were more effective, in cleaning and manageability, when used diluted to half strength with water. The more expensive brands did not work any better than the cheaper ones. Thick, creamy, rich shampoos were no more effective than runny thin ones. Additives such as vitamins and proteins worsened the shampoo performance.²¹ Shampoo advertised for dry hair were not necessarily better for dry hair, nor were oily shampoos any better for oily hair.

In short, perhaps it is the consumer who has been "blinded" by the product? Most of the assertions concerning product performance is just advertising hype. Shampoo does have recognised side-effects: it can smart the conjunctiva, it can leave

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.188.

²⁰ Franke, E., 1987: Ch. 28, p. 256.

²¹ *ibid.*, 1987: p. 257.

scum build-up on the hair shaft, ingestion of shampoo contents can cause minor gastro-intestinal problems.

But, nowhere on the plastic shampoo bottle is the word grease mentioned. However, reading of chemical literature concerning shampoo formulation and chemical analysis mentions nothing else. The word grease evokes a type of negative reference to the shampoo user.

Using the word grease in shampoo bottle text would provoke reference to the abject body, causing rejection and loss of identification with the shampoo bottle. Interestingly enough, grease is a natural substance secreted through human skin and scalp. New born babes are covered in a whitish layer of grease called Vernix, which offers protection and pliability to their skin. However, once delivered, babies are often bathed for the instant removal of reminders of birth's uncontrollable messiness.

Oiliness in shampoo text is never mentioned yet the concept of the natural is continually evoked. Jeffrey Deitch suggests in his catalogue for *Artificial Nature*, that we inhabit an environment where it may no longer be possible to describe as natural:

Nature is less and less the mysterious nourishing
force that emerges with the birth of the universe
and more and more as something that we are
re-creating ourselves.²²

Rather, the consumer is mollified with a variety of pseudo-scientific terms, rendering the consumer's hair, and in turn, their inner imagined selves, vulnerable and found wanting, unable to dismiss the 'life-saving' properties of the shampoo bottle's contents. Shampoo text disguises the normal state of physiological workings of oil glands and substitutes and constructs its own artificial nature.

Washing is considered a private and personal experience in our material culture. The rituals of cleansing are promoted as an individualised concern by shampoo advertising, the sharing of a secret between consumer and product. This artificial intimacy encourages bathroom self-confinement and privacy, whilst the process of transformation takes place.

²² Deitch, J & Friedman, D., 'Artificial Nature', Deiste Collection of Contemporary Art, Athens, Greece, 1990.

Haddrian Piggot's sculpture's reference hygiene and social control. He believes that washing is full of symbolic significance. It can be equally valid as a statement about class, aspiration, belief and belonging, as a religious ceremony or a public declaration. Writing to Richard Hamilton, a 1960's pop artist, who had informed his own art making, Piggot explained of his own work, *Resurrection*, 1994, a bar of soap measuring eighteen inches across, imprinted with the words SLIP IT TO ME,

In our advanced state of soap addiction, we the consumer need it, and the manufacturers sell it to us. The transaction is smooth, effortless - they make it, we use it. How did the associations get set up? Who slipped them in whilst we weren't looking (see illustration no. 8).²³

The consumer's inability to resist the temptations of bathroom condiments and the slippery persuasions of advertising hype has left them vulnerable, and as Piggot laments, "we are addicts hooked on hygiene, suffering from a washing disorder." ²⁴ Sarah Kent, in her critique of Piggott's soap series, *Wash*, (1993) remarks,

Cleanliness is one of the pillars of Western civilisation.

Personal hygiene enlists you into the company of the blessed - the healthy, wealthy and aromatic.²⁵

She refers to the French philosopher Edgar Morin who identified what she calls the acquisition of the "filth complex",²⁶ which is the first step in the construction of a cleanliness threshold that fuels the need for toiletries and household cleaners, setting the individual firmly on the rungs of the consumer ladder.

To make sense of these assertions, it is of value to side-sweep past shampoo briefly and examine the oppositional and symbolic associations of hair and its association with definitions of the feminine and with forms of control.

²³ Piggott, H. quoted in Kent, S., *Shark Infested Waters* , Satchii collection of British Art in the 90's, London, Zwemmer, 1995, p. 69.

²⁵ *ibid.*, 1995, p. 69.

²⁶ Kent, S., *Shark Infested Waters* , The Saatchi Collection of British Art in the 90's, London, Zwemmer, 1995, p. 67.

²⁷ *ibid.*, 1995, p. 68.

²⁸ Frazer, J.G., *The Golden Bough*., A study in Magic and Religion, London, Macmillan, abridged, 1972 p. 224.

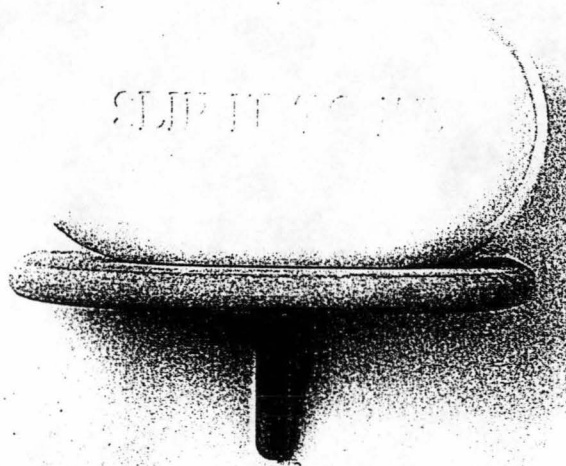


Illustration no. 8 : Resurrection (after Richard H.) 1994
white shrinkwrapped soap, shelf
230 x 460 x 140

Hadrain Piggott

Hair mythology and visions of femininity

Hair has always been a symbolic substance, recognised as having mystical powers and sacredness, in just about all cultures and civilisations, it is clearly visible, it is easily manipulated, it is not painful to cut, it grows, (so that transformations are only semi-permanent), and it can be shaped into forms of sexual and social adornment.²⁷ The appeal of long hair goes far back into western mythology, for example, the stories of Mary Magdalene, Rapunzel and Lady Godiva. It is considered a mysterious substance.

Connections with magic and special transformative powers are replete in literature, fairy stories, legends and religious myths. Psychologist, Charles Berg, considers that women's hair is imbued with sexuality. He coded hair in the following manner in ritual situations;

long hair = unrestrained sexuality;

short hair, partially shaved hair, bound hair = celibacy.

Long, flowing and swaying, the sexualised properties of hair are promoted in shampoo presentation and advertising.

Our material culture functions mythologically reinforcing cultural stereotypes in seemingly everyday objects. Women consumers are continually refereed to traditional ideals as the measure of acceptability. Through the many idioms of mass representation women consumers are told to reject their own body odours and body fluids to be sanitised and rendered uniform, deodorised like our history.²⁸ As head hair is one of our cultures definitions of the feminine, it represents the three polar oppositions of gender ideology. Mike Featherstone in *The Body : Social Process and cultural theory*, suggests that there are major propositions that cover the symbolic practice of hair.

1. Opposite sexes have opposite hair (male-female)
2. Head hair and body hair are quite opposite (head-body)
3. Different hair represents different ideologies.

Each of these propositions has gender and ideological significance, the implications of which underpin many of the attitudes and beliefs of our popular culture. The ambiguities

²⁹ Corbin, A., 'The Foul and the Fragrant',
Odour and the Social Imagination., 1996. p. 45.

³⁰ Brownmiller, S., *Femininity* , New York: Linden Press/Simon & Schuster,
1984, pp. 55-70.

associated with hair originating in these propositions are reinforced within the constructs and values of Shampoo Mythology. After reading a wide range of literature from Lelord Kordell's juicy misogynist text, *Lady Beloved - what enlightened men want from women*, to more informed work, for example, Susan Brownmiller's *Femininity*, I gained invaluable insight into how these propositions have been incorporated into our popular belief systems. These propositions aim at dividing gender by promoting ideological differences and exclusivity. On the first proposition, opposite sexes have opposite hair, I refer first to Susan Brownmiller's quote from 16th century Purist, William Prynne, who said that a woman with cut hair is a filthy spectacle and much like a monster.²⁹ As mentioned above, head-hair is considered one of the attributes of the feminine, consequently, shampoo advertising and presentation is aimed specifically at women. Betty Friedan identified the important role women held in the market driven economy.³⁰ As women became more isolated and contained within the constructs of the nuclear family and suburbia, shopping became a means of personal expression. Friedman argues that by casting women as experts in domestic and personal matters, advertisers not only increased retail trade, they redefined and idealised gender roles and located women as upholders of traditional, patriarchal values.

For the second proposition referring to the oppositional nature of head and body hair, I give the example of Lelord Kordell,³¹ who castigates women who have the audacity not to shave auxiliary hair. "Nature did not take into account the male dislike of a 'furry' feminine body and Man definitely does not take delight in a body as hairy as his own". Hair on any other zone of a woman's body besides the head is rejected. A depilated body evokes powerlessness and child-like passivity, idealised attributes of femininity. Germaine Greer, in her book, *The Female Eunuch* ³²describes how hair is a representation of power in our material culture and as such an indication of aggressive sexuality. For the third

³¹ Friedman, B., *The Feminine Mystique*, New York, Norton, 1963, p. 112.

³¹ Kordell, L., *Lady beloved : what enlightened men want from women.*, 195 3: p. 54.

³² Greer, G., *The Female Eunuch*, London, MacGibbon & Kee, 1971, p. 46.²⁹

proposition, different hair has different ideologies, I refer to Mike Featherstone examples of Jewish women who cut their hair when they marry, as do many orders of Catholic nuns when they take their vows. The reason being that in these faiths, the virtuous woman does not show her hair, for a woman's hair is described as nakedness and can only be seen by her husband.³³ Only a shameful woman would have her hair uncovered and ungroomed. In our material culture, shampoo advertising promotes images of well groomed and tidy women. A 'tidy' woman is a controlled woman. By actively participating in the act of shampooing the consumer locates imagined status and social position by complying with the paradoxically repressive attributes of shampoo and its dictates. Unwashed hair, as ungroomed hair is considered unacceptable and outside of 'traditional' values. Art depictions of the Virtuous women are images of women with controlled and concealed hair. Ideological approval is given to women's moral character who fulfil the expectations of well-groomed and washed hair in our material culture.

The words, Ultra Body is referred to constantly in shampoo bottle text. A type of mythological imagined body that consumers desire as their own, or rather what the manufacturers of shampoo products, would wish them to desire: a type of super natural. A naturalness conceived artificially, impregnated with all forms of contemporary commodity exchanges, the plastic shampoo bottle just being one. The Ultra Body is a vision borne out of a constructed sense of naturalism and the importance of appearance in our material culture.

Elizabeth Grosz asserts that women's corporeality is ascribed as modes of seepage and fluidity, defining their "sexed" bodies.³⁴ The female body, she believes is coded as a body that leaks. This fluidity is bounded by patriarchal definition. Grosz refers to Julia Kristeva, who has differentiated body fluids into polluting and non-polluting types. Kristeva asserts that tears and semen are considered non-polluting body fluids. Polluting body fluids, with equally negative

³³ Featherstone, M. , *The Body : Social Process and Cultural Theory*, Eds. M. Featherstone, Mike Hepworth, Bryan Turner; London, Sage, 1991, p. 112-126.

³⁴ Grosz, E., *Sexed Difference, Sexed Bodies, Volatile Bodies* 1994, U.S.A., April p. 204 .

connotations are seen as menstrual fluids and excrement.

The Transformative Properties of a Successful Shampoo

In general, what determines a shampoo's success is whether or not it provides a liberating experience for the consumer. Chemist Charles Fox, prepared a list of the attributes of a successful shampoo: ease of application; lather; rinsing and easy wet combing; manageability; body; lustre; fragrance and colour.³⁵

Combining my findings from the shampoo component formulary and microscopic chemical action, I referred these properties to mythological hair associations and the attributes that Fox suggests. I then related these properties to what Baudrillard referred to as second level messages in his text, *Sign Function and Class Logic - The Political Economy of the Sign*,³⁶ which relates to the social significance of that same object, in this instance, the plastic shampoo bottle and its contents.

Ease of application

The major function of a shampoo is emulsification of oils, dirt and debris, to speed their removal of water from the hair shaft and scalp. The single most important ingredient to achieve this purpose is the primary cleaning agent or detergent. The most widely used detergent in shampoo is primary laryl sulfonates. (The signification of the botanical sounding name, did not go unnoticed with this writer).

Shampoo contents are made viscous enough to stay in the hand before application over the head. Thickeners are added to the shampoo formulary to enhance the significance of richness and 'goodness'. Once water is applied to the viscous medium, shampoo magically transforms into a translucent 'rich lather'. This ease of transformation, the slide of molecular configurations, similar to the molecular transformations in the synthesis of plastic, as shampoo alters its physical state from solid to gas, is integral to the magical significance of the substance.

³⁵ Fox, C., 'An Introduction to Formulation of Shampoo', *Cosmetics and Toiletries*, Vol. 103., March, 1988, p. 2.

³⁶ Baudrillard, J., *Sign Function and Class logic-The Political Economy of the Sign*, St. Louis, Telos Press, 1981. p. 45.

Lather

The shampoo must develop a dense and luxurious lather. Foam and shampoo are almost synonymous in the eyes of the consumer. Foam itself is not a function, but rather a symbol of shampoo's worth. Although the amount of foam produced by a detergent has little to do with its inherent cleaning ability, most consumers are convinced it has everything to do with this benefit. Foam is chiefly trapped air, it has no actual effect. However, its symbolic quality has led to extensive efforts to provide maximum quality foam, (moderately dense and stable being the best type). Foam height is considered the measure of foam's worth. To build up foam height more surfactant is added to the formulation than is necessary. Barthes description of foam in *Mythologies* reads, "to begin with, foam appears to lack any usefulness, then its abundant, easy, almost infinite proliferation allows one to suppose there is a substance from which it issues a vigorous germ, a healthy and powerful essence."³⁷

However, what matters, argues Barthes, "is the delicious image of a substance at once deep and airy which can govern the molecular order of a material without damaging it."³⁸

(see illustration no. 9)

³⁷ Barthes R., 1972, p. 36.
³⁸ *ibid.*, 1972, p. 36.

(see illustration no. 9)

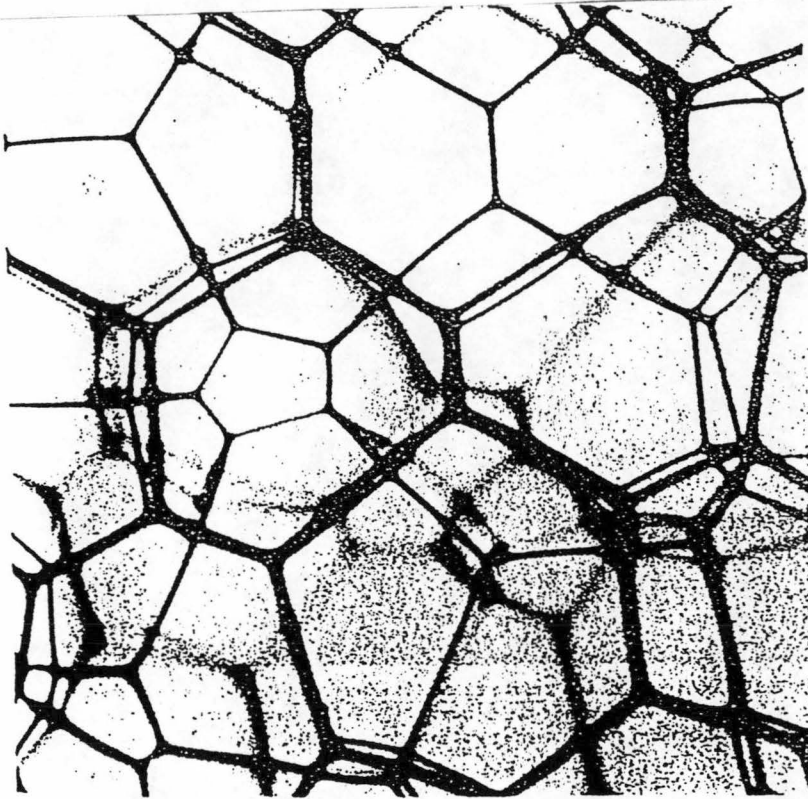


Illustration no. 9 : The microscopic structure of foam

The classical appropriation of foam's signifying powers is in the investment of Venus imagery in shampoo bottles. Sandro Botticelli's painting, 'The Birth of Venus' (1484-6) depicts Aphrodites (meaning "foam born") arrival on the shores of the island Cythera, surrounded by a sea of white foam. The Venus image is one of ideal femininity, continually re-invented in depictions of women throughout art history and contemporary popular culture. (see Illustration no. 10 and no. 11 for comparison).

Owen Rachleff,³⁹ in his discussion regarding the occult in art, suggests that the 'Birth of Venus' captures the essential astrological meaning of Venus, as a signifier of both erotic and romantic love. The pearlised shampoo bottle's presentation and contents reference Aphrodite, her shell transport, her conception and birth from the severed genitals of Uranus thrown in to the foamy sea. A chemical example responsible for lather in shampoo is - Cocamide MEA.

Rinsing and Easy Wet Combing

Rinsing the hair is a very important stage in the shampoo procedure. Inefficient rinsing can lead to scum build-up of shampoo alkaline residues. Shampoo strips natural oils found in hair, so replacement oils have to be returned to the hair in the form of conditioning fluids, so that the easy wet combing can take place. One shampoo manufacturer Redken, has invested this empirical information in their shampoo, producing a conditioner called CAT, *daily remoisturising conditioner*. In the text, mention is given to the product's ability to remoisturise the hair. Since everything outside the scalp bed on the hair shaft is made from dead keratinised scales demonstrates how the use of such text, infers/signifies a type of false scientific correctness and legitimacy. Tangled, matted hair infers unattractiveness and uncontrollableness in the feminine gender. The chemical responsible for this function in shampoo is Dimethicone.

³⁹ Rachleff, O., *The Occult in Art* _Intro. Issac. Bashevis, London, Cromwell Editions, 1990. p. 32-34.



New cosmetic style packaging
to compliment our
New Leave In Conditioning Mist.



Illustration no. 10 : Contemporary SunSilk Venus,
note cameo insignia

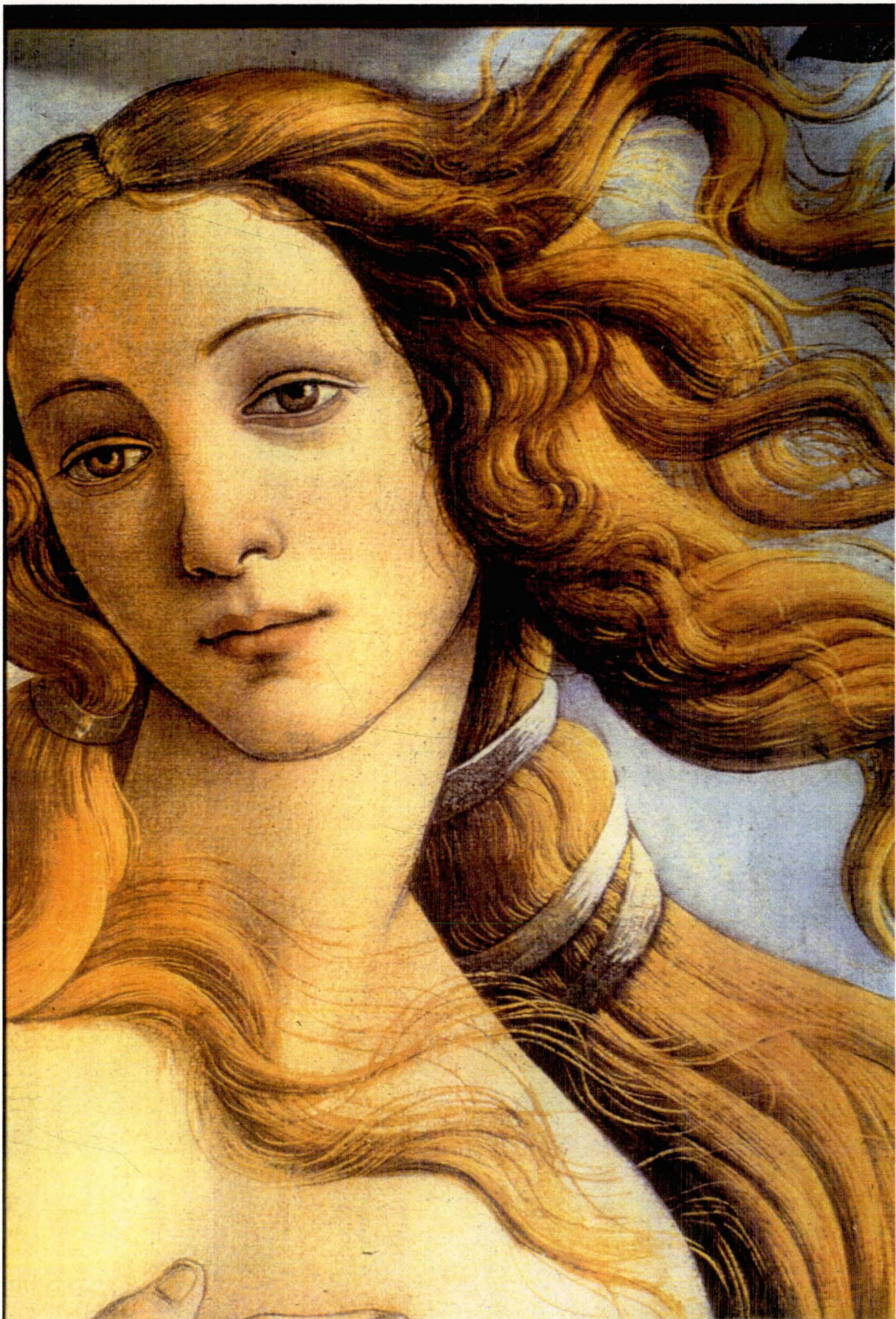


Illustration no. 11 : Sandro Botticelli
Birth of Venus (1484-6)

Manageability

Hair should be left in a manageable condition when combed dry with no frizziness or 'fly-away'. The reference to manageability mimics the concern of the consumer to remain in control. By ascribing a chemical formula as salvation from unmanagability, shampoo advertising infers that the use of their product will be instrumental in the consumer's ability to initiate change and control over their own lives. Shampoo not only grants the consumer selection rights, it also promotes the image of the consumer as co-liberator. This clever advertising technique installs a type of imagined confidence in consumers, whilst their real rights to appearance and position are ignored. Chemical example of conditioning agent in shampoo ingredients is Glycol Stearate and Panthenol.

Body

The hair should have 'body' when dry. Full, volumous hair has for centuries been a sign of gender and sexual identity. As well, hair signifies material wealth and social status. Loose flowing hair is associated with youth and leisure in our material culture. Those who toil in hard labour rarely have their hair uncontained. Though images associating long hair exclusively to femininity are quite recent. Susan Brownmiller⁴⁰ discusses the fact that the intrinsic femininity of long hair took centuries to take hold, as an even older tradition existed identifying long hair with physical strength, holiness and other masculine virtues. To signify this sense of body, the shampoo fluid has been thickened up to give it a sense of rich, creamy sexualised goodness.

Interestingly enough, fair-headed women do have thicker and fuller locks than any other hair colour group. Blondes encapsulate the look of the golden-haired Aphrodite, but there is an anatomical reason for blonde's thicker locks. Fair-haired people have the most amount of hair follicles, up to 120,000, compared with brunettes who have 90-100,000 hairs and red heads, the least at 90,000 hair

⁴⁰ Brownmiller, S., 1984, p. 55-70.

follicles.⁴¹ However, brunettes do have thicker hair cuticles which make up for their lack of numbers.

The Shampoo formulary lists Sodium Chloride (salt) as a reliable thickener and viscosity builder. Another chemical example is thickener Xanthan Gum.

Lustre

The hair should be left in a lustrous condition. Washing hair can raise the cuticles on the outer layer of hair, (which under a microscope look like shingles on a roof). Pearllising agents added to the formula, signifying balm-like properties, also coat the hair follicle, resulting in the 'shingles' lying flat, able to reflect light, hence shine. Lustrous hair is also a construct of desirable femininity. The underlying inference is that shampoo liquid is pure and unspoilt, like the 'virtual' non-polluting body fluids that it represents. Unleashing its fresh, untainted odours personally to the consumer.

Fragrance

There are two distinct functions of fragrance in shampoo content. One is to cover objectionable odours arising from components used in shampoo formulation, and the second is to uphold the constructs of what is considered feminine and socially desirable in our material culture. Body odour, as described by perfumer Grenouille in Patrick Suskind's novel, *Perfume : The story of a Murderer* reflects the general anxiety and uncomfortableness contemporary consumers feel about their own body odours.

And yet - there was a basic perfumatory theme to the odour of humanity, a rather simple one, incidentally: a sweaty-oily,

⁴¹ Lublowe, I., *New Hope for Your Hair*, A Scientific Guide to Healthy Hair for Men, Women and Children, 1961, p.73.

sour-cheesy, quite richly repulsive basic theme that clings to all humans equally and above which each individual's aura hovered only as a small cloud of more refined particularity.⁴²

While odour does not effect the function of shampoo, it makes all the difference to how the consumer perceives and identifies with the shampoo. Preservatives are added to inhibit bacterial growth of natural protein additives and their odours. These additives keep populations of micro-organisms at bay which can infiltrate at any stage of processing, whilst occupying steamy bathrooms and consumer handling examples - Formalin, Methylchloroisothiazolinone, Methylisothiazolinone. Other shampoos adopt a persona that has associations with particular odour. For example *Aqua Marine* manufactured by Revlon promotes its product as being as fresh as-the-sea, yet a close examination of the contents lists Marine hydrolysed proteins as the source of the fishy smell.

Colour

The chemical function of colour is to make shampoo look more appealing and visually suggestive. Shampoo bottle colours incorporate the characteristics of a 'virtual' non-polluting body fluid, a fluid that is signified with both purifying and sacred properties. Similar to the examples Kristeva gives in an earlier reference to the Ultra Body with her coupling of tears and semen, the virtual non-polluting shampoo fluid also embraces qualities of translucence, clarity and purity⁴³ The fetishised shampoo bottle delivers its contents like ejaculate (see illustration no. 12). Shampoo content is mostly creamy white or pale pink. Clear shampoo liquids do not appear as popular as they carry a more clinical (watery) type of signification. The shampoo user incorporates the qualities of this signified shampoo fluid into their own personal referencing system.

Application of this virtual non-polluting shampoo fluid is by hand, and true to its definition, it is massaged, pressed and formed

⁴² Suskind, P. *Perfume : The Story of a Murderer*, 1986, (trans. Woods,J) London p.107.

⁴³ Grosz, E., *Sexual Difference Sexed Bodies, Volatile Bodies* , 1994 U.S.A p.206.

into idealised visions of a virtual self. Forever entangled, the consumer is forced to consume the ever improved version.

Manufacturers of shampoo add colour to their products through a variety of sources. A & F Pears soap is made with alcohol to give its traditional clear amber appearance. Pears lists Hydrolysed animal collagens, in its Timotei shampoo formulary, which is also known as tallow, "the left -overs of slaughtered meat"⁴⁴. Chemical example: D and C Yellow No. 10.

As I compiled the successful properties of a shampoo, as ascribed by Fox, I began to see over layerings of meaning between the chemical actions of shampoo and the symbolic associations it triggers or accomodates in the consumer. These successful properties transfer their meaning into the idealised visions that the consumers have of herself, investing their transformatory promise within the consumers inner being.

In the piece *I Dream, I Dream* (1996) I wanted to invest feelings of desire and transformatory promise, into my dream pool's opaque fluids. I used pearlised tear-drop shaped, plastic shampoo pieces placed into a mosaic pattern. I 'planted' splatterings of green and "natural" shampoo text to rise up and over the sides of the pool, mimicking random patterns. Within the illusion of turbulent fluids lies the promise of transformation. The shampoo fluid, signified with the magical property of hope, takes on the qualities of a sacred fluid. A virtual non-polluting body fluid representing the indeterminacy of women's physical boundaries. Between the fluid and the solid, bubbles lay captured forever, becoming plastic spheres floating on a matrix of solidified fluid, filled with the wishes of idealised beauty and constructed naturalness. The dream pool offers reflection to the consumer who has a constant need to reference themselves against an idealised vision of their own identity.

As I worked on the plastic shampoo bottle, depictions of women stared back at me. Women's silhouettes with the long extended necks. Woman's thick and tousled hair, abundant and careless, caught in some breeze from a faraway shore. The knowing smiles of women pretending to be other women. Insignias that look like

⁴⁴ Gray,C., *Choice, January , Hair: The long and the short of it* p. 11. 41

golden medals, prizes for compliance and passivity. Imagined glory for our 'crowning glory'.



Illustration no. 12 : Range of Shampoo colours

Shampoo Bottle Types

As discussed in an earlier section, shampoo is currently manufactured according to hair type. Shampoo manufacturers may do this as a marketing ploy to encourage consumer identification, but it also allows the opportunity of promoting traditional visions of women and boundaries of acceptable female behaviour, as well as repressing qualities which are not considered controllable.

In an attempt to decode and expose the machinations of shampoo mythology, I have identified five types of shampoo bottles which can be categorised by stereotypical associations concerning women and representations of femininity, rather than hair types and ailments.

In the breakdown analysis of shampoo bottle types, the majority of bottles I collected were of the Virtuous bottle type, while *Femme-Fatale* and *Natural* bottles came second and third in numbers. The *Scientific* bottles came fourth, and last, with the least amount of bottles, came the 'No Frills' *Victim/Martyr* bottle.

Throughout the history of art, depictions of women, mostly by male artists, have been stereotypical and misrepresentative. They fall between the *Virtuous Madonna* and the *Femme-Fatale*. At one extreme women are portrayed as passive with the associated quality of receptive, nurturing docility, at the other extreme, she's the temptress, the seducer, siren, or trickster, eg. *Salome*, *Medusa* or the *Vamp*. Hair accommodates the whole spectrum of stereotypes. Women's long hair may be considered sacred, but it also signifies the properties of profanity and disorder. The plastic shampoo bottle incorporates any of these idealised visions of women, in any number of combinations and presentations.

1) *The Virtuous Bottle*

The predominant colours of this type are colours opalised white to shell-pink. Its form is soft, yielding, curvy and amphora shaped. The *Virtuous* bottle has text that soothes and reassures. Examples are *Pears* manufactured by A & F Pears, *Family*, manufactured by Amcal, *Palmolive* manufactured by Palmolive Ltd and *Pure* by Johnson & Johnson. With delicate pink and mauve text, soft-edged shoulders and gold trim lids, I found these shampoo bottles perfect for the virtuous piece I was constructing.

I constructed a font-like form for my piece, *Milk and Blood*. (1996) (See illustration no. 13). I wanted to evoke references to the tradition of baptism, the purifying and cleansing properties of water and the iconographic power of the altar. I wondered why the suffix *re*, appears so frequently in certain shampoo bottle text. For example; remoisturising, reconditioning, revitalising, replenishing.

I suggest that a biblical association is signified in this instance. The use of such text reflects the Judao-Christian preoccupation with the imperfect physical body and the constant attempt at remaking, redefining or recapturing what they believe is real. It exposes the unsteady and paradoxical relationship between physical beauty and religious ascetics. A knowing shampoo consumer would never need to read the instructions printed on the plastic shampoo bottle: 'Wet hair, lather, rinse and condition', any more than a Christian believer would need to see the text in the bible to recite the Lord's Prayer. An interesting observation: Proctor and Gamble released their latest new improved, "two-in-one" shampoo and conditioner combination, Pert, onto the Asian market, calling the product *Rejoice*.

Another unique feature to this type of bottle is the image of the Uroborus, a Greek mythological reference to a serpent devouring its own tail. Bram Dijkstra in *Idols of Perversity* ⁴⁵ suggests that the image of the Uroborus became a frequently- used symbol, signifying the social and sexual containment of women, in turn-of-the-century depictions of women. Artists and poets at this period seem to have had a fascination with female hair, using mythological references to present a constructed interpretation of femininity, whilst repressing their own inner anxieties concerning women's sexuality,(see appendix for transcript of Charles Baudelaire's 'Head of Hair' in *Flowers of Evil*). ⁴⁶ As an example of this, painter Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones utilized the theme of women's self-containment in his work *Mirror of Venus* (1898). His *Venus* stares down at her reflection in a pool, the mythological first mirror (see illustration no. 14) Likewise, the Venus on the Sunsilk insignia stares lamely with averted gaze, whilst abundant golden hair is

⁴⁵ Dijkstra, B., *Idols of Perversity*;, Fantasies of Feminine Evil, in the fin-de-sciel, New York: Oxford Uni. Press, 1986. p.120-141.

⁴⁶ Baudelaire , C., *The Flowers of Evil* , Oxford Uni. Press. Oxford, Trans. &ed. J. McGowan, 1993.

swept up and across her face. She is also captured within a type of self-containment. The cameo insignia on the Sunsilk bottle symbolises the mirror of women's self-scrutiny, presenting a constant reminder to the user as a sign of their own containment. The sculpture, *Venus was her name* (1995) is my representation of this type of shampoo bottle.



Illustration no. 13 : Milk and Blood (1996)
1600(h)x1000(w)x730(d)



Illustration no. 14 : Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones (1833-1898)
"The mirror of Venus (1898)

I wanted to find other examples of a contemporary Venus in our material culture. A manufactured representation that promoted visions of idealised womanhood. They were not hard to find, Rachel Hunter, model for Pantene-Pro-V was just what I was looking for. Over a six month period I collected from popular culture magazines a colour photo/ articles dossier file on Ms. Rachel Hunter. (see illustration no. 15)

A REAL WOMAN

Whenever I see a picture of Rod Stewart's wife, Rachel, I notice how wonderfully natural she is – the epitome of a real woman. She smiles often, doesn't appear to mind being slightly heavier than the usual bone-thin, hard-faced run of models. No silicone-filled lips or mammary glands for her.

She seems to genuinely love being with her kids and looks happy and contented. There should be more like her. More power to her!

J. Keelan,
Tranmere, SA.

Illustration no. 15 : 'Your View', readers letter about Rachel Hunter *Woman's Day* January. 1997.

It was not difficult to see Ms. Hunters appeal. Frequently photographed with blonde-haired children, spouting earnest but inconsequential prattle about hair care advice, she exemplifies how advertising has appropriated historical classical and ecclesiastical references concerning the virtuous mother and re-invested them within the persona of their product and their actors. As *Venus was her name* was being made, it occurred to me that I was creating forms from classical ideological representations of the feminine.

Whilst studying the semiotic significance of colour, I was interested in the origins of pink and how it became associated with the feminine. Penny Sparke in her text, *As Long as its Pink*,⁴⁷ discusses how this colour was the most popular colour for 1950s American interiors. It represented a distinct attempt at gender differentiation that underpinned 1950's society. The use of pink linked femininity to the domestic environment with its associations of leisure and the exotic. Pink also served to link fifties feminine values to the gentility of the past. Penny Sparkes suggests that, used in combination with gold, pink instantly evokes a historical decorative idiom, signifying "French good taste" and continental style. This suggestive pastel graced the surfaces of all 1950s domestic appliances. It evokes supposed feminine good taste and opulence, imparting a sense of the European pre-revolutionary moment into the bourgeois domestic sphere of the time.

I decided that blood and milk, representing both the sexual and the maternal, mixed together, made the qualities of Virtuous Pink, exposing the duality between masculine revulsion and desire for the feminine. Elizabeth Grosz,⁴⁸ in her discussion on body fluids, discusses Aristotle's comparison of milk and menstrual fluids. Aristotle asserted that the nature of both substances was similar. He believed that these substances represented women's fluidity, which need the introduction of masculine properties, such as semen, to act upon the substance of menstrual fluid to make it set, and once set, prepared for the seeds of man's germination (and domination). (see illustration no. 16)

⁴⁷ Sparke, P., *As long as it Pink*, London: Pandora: 1995, p. 145.

⁴⁸ Grosz, E., 1994: p. 207.

THE DELUXE EMPTY
SHAMPOO
AND CONDITIONER
DEPOT

WILL BE TOURING TO THE
FOLLOWING
VENUES

*Dockside : Hunter st
Cazaly Fitness for Life : 73 Bathurst st
Taroona High School*

During May and June

*let your empty bottles experience the
look of life*

2) *The Femme Fatale Bottle*

The colours of this type of bottle are predominantly red to shades of pinks. This type is more likely to be presented in a sleek, phallic-shape rather than amphora-shaped pack.

Femme-Fatal text makes constant use of sexualised adjectives, such as fortifying, protective, moisturising. The text is often underlined with silver or gold streaks. Examples are *Salon Selective*, *Finesse*, *Vidal Sassoon*, *Pantene Pro-V*, *Schwarzkopf*.

There is an air of European chic and panache about this type of bottle. The text is often written in French, testimonials are signed from European hairdressers such as Sassoon and Henri Mastey, promoting the unique attributes of their shampoo range and how much they personally care for the consumer's hair.

The piece *Deep Reconstructor* (1996) is my representation of feminine sexual expression. Like a blood red organ full of confidence and allure, it teases the viewer to look deep within, exposing plastic labial folds and blood red convolutions. I wanted to recreate desire, to make the piece seductive. I must admit a personal bias towards Vidal Sassoon bottles. I loved the deep red colouring and the sliver of gold trim round the insignia. Vidal Sassoon shampoo signifies a type of self-indulgence, promoting individual pleasure and performance, rather than the more democratic qualities proffered by other types of shampoo. It surely must be the shampoo for selfish consumers, who must never want to share hair brushes or bath water.

3) *The Natural Bottle*

This type can be subdivided into Earth Goddess bottle and Sea Goddess bottle. The colours of this type are earth browns to sea blues. Examples of the Earth Goddess bottles are *Organics*, *Timotei* and *Alchemy*, each containing a heady plethora of herbs, vitamins and mineral extracts contained within an environmentally sustainable, friendly bottle. Examples of Sea Goddess bottles are Revlon's *Aqua Marine* and Delva's *Solar care*.

The word 'Natural' appears constantly in Natural bottle text, yet a close examination of the listed contents betrays a somewhat different range of chemical compositions, charmingly referred to by some shampoo companies as 'ingredients', from what one might imagine 'natural' to be made. The 'natural' that is offered is a constructed vision, an unfixable vision that celebrates the artificial and the spectacular (see illustration no. 17).

With *I Dream, I Dream* (1996) I wanted to evoke the presence of water. I used Earth and Sea Goddess bottles to signify the unpredictability of nature and its potential, whilst also representing the fluidity of women's bodies.

Palmolive Naturals, manufactured by Colgate-Palmolive, lists formalin as one of its composites. Assuming the properties of the natural, evoking organic wholesomeness while comprising chemical acids such as Ald-ehyde of Formic Acid⁴⁹, (formaldehydye) which wipe out multiplying micro-organism colonies in the plastic shampoo bottle.

When cream conditioners first appeared on the market, in the early 1960s, chemical additives used in their formulation were boastfully referred to as 'synthetics'⁵⁰ at a time when man-made substances were applauded, if misunderstood.

⁴⁹ Coulson, J., *The Little Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, Great Britain: 1969: p. 290.

⁵⁰ Schueller, R. & Romanowski, P., *Surfactant Science, Cosmetics and Toiletries*, Vol. 109. August, 1994, p. 12.

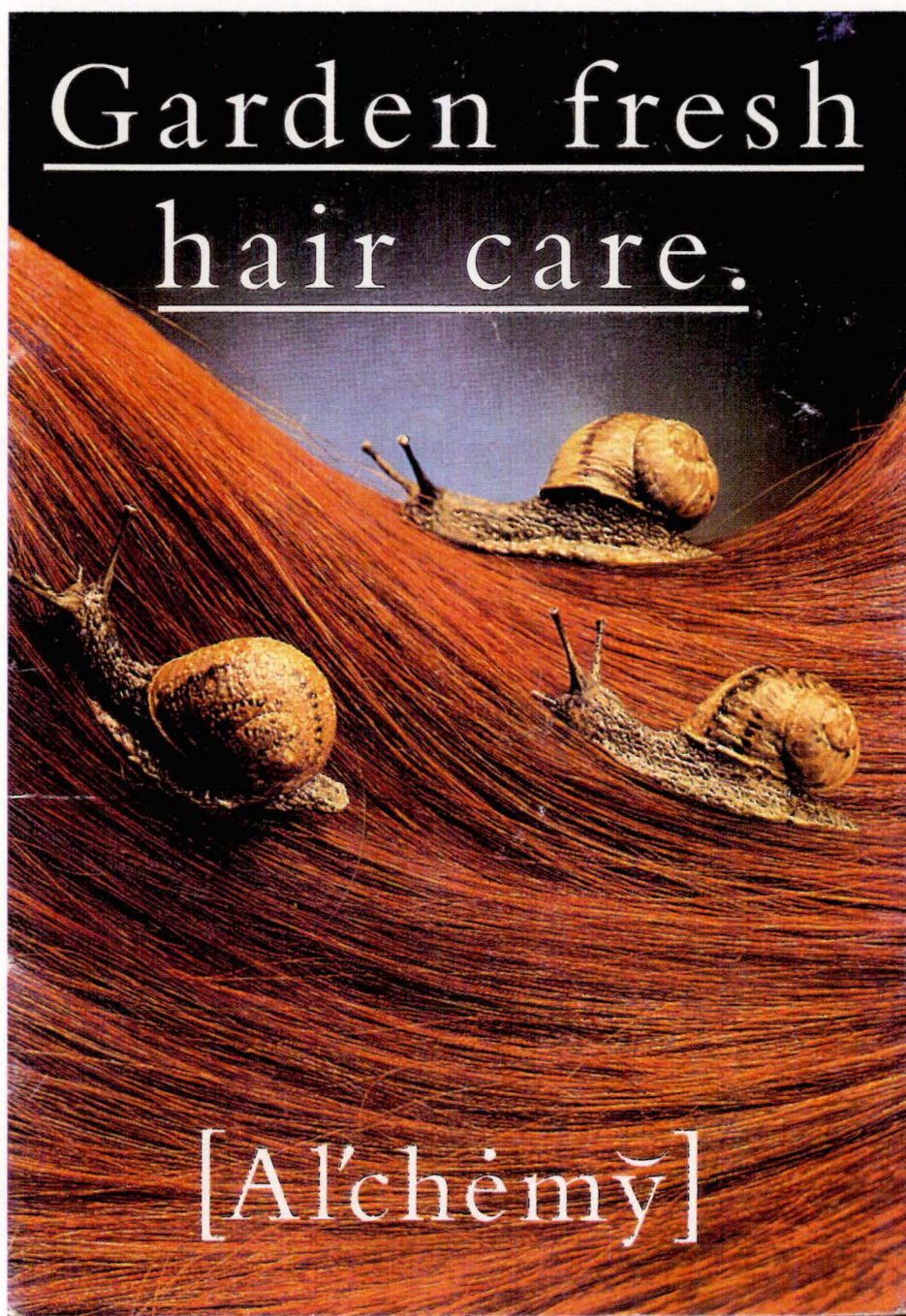


Illustration no. 17 : Alchemy Hair care products
by All Natural, Western Australia

4) *The Scientific/ Mechanical Bottle*

The colours of this type are predominantly executive white to computer grey. The text mentions scientific rationale, formulas, psuedo-scientific diagrams, grids, polymers, proteins, molecular structures and graphs.

The example of *Nexus - Nature and Earth united with Science* manufactured by Redken highlights how the concept of science and nature are made to conform under the self-righteous zeal of advertising imagery. In the interest of the consumer, the world is being made to put right, opposing disciplines conspiring to stem the flow and the denial of hair grease.

The empirical sounding letter x, appears predominant in scientific Shampoo Bottle names. Scientific sounding text prescribed to a material culture who remain enthusiastic and trustful of technological advancements. Examples are *Nexus* manufactured by Redding, *Acitex* manufactured by Wella and *Genetix*, manufactured by Mayo International.

5) *The "No Frills" or Victim/Martyr Bottle*

The colours of this type of bottle are predominantly clear or opaque whites. The text signals the lack of frills or expensive packaging, savings to be made, and bargain basement accessibility.

I read a world wide web article about humans using horse shampoo, (see appendix no.3). I realised the motivations to use this type of bottle were very complex. Apparently some consumers try to deny the influence of advertising and packaging and the signifying power of that product. I believe much more research is needed here. I also read a hilarious world wide web story entitled, *Confessions of a Breck Girl* by Melissa J. Price, 1995. Here was a woman I wanted to meet. A woman who had seen shampoo in the same light as myself. Melissa Price has connected periods of her own emotional development with types of shampoo she has consumed. Starting with Johnson's *Baby Shampoo*, she worked her way through a swag of varieties, aiming to exemplify the qualities of "the mysterious woman" referred to in a "type" of shampoo bottle. Switching from brand to brand, which she equated with

sophistication and allure, so that she would become bestowed with the properties from the shampoo bottle.

I also found an anonymous inclusion on the Internet of a subversive example of someone who rejects entirely the assertions of shampoo. I quote in full:

Although shampoo is designed to clean hair, its name gives away its true make-up; artificial shit. For centuries the aristocracy continually got very annoyed, and beheaded the shit-sodden peasants for having less dandruff than they did. Then about two hundred years ago they realised that mixing shit into your hair was actually one of the best ways to get rid of dandruff. Of course, the cosmetics companies couldn't market real shit as hair cleaner, so chemists came up with an artificial version. ⁵¹

Such hostility towards shampoo, seldom gets much air-time. It goes against the grain of social decency to question the medium that keeps us all ideologically scrubbed.

⁵¹ Anonymous World Wide Web entry, 1996.

Conclusion

The plastic shampoo bottle is not to be trusted. Its verbose claims and testimonials, once dissected, prove erroneous and misleading. It promotes anxiety through the fragmentation of body parts. It exhorts the consumer into a cycle of consumption by providing a vision of idealised femininity, and instructions to fulfil the wish of the perfect self. The image it presents is a distorted reflection, emphasizing its own importance and indispensability to the consumer. The plastic shampoo bottle invests its own agenda into the familiar and personal, tempting the consumer with its calculated use of appropriated classic symbolic imagery, such as the mystical power of head-hair, and promoting a false importance of hygiene.

The scopophilic world of consumption offers a barrage of commodity solutions to our obsession with idealised visions of beauty. Oscar Wilde says, "it is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances, the true mystery is the visible, not the invisible".⁵²

The ever changing forms of shampoo bottles promote physical self-improvement through consumption of ever new-improved varieties. The fickle manners of the bottle underwrite the transitory and transformative properties of hair. The appeal and promise of the bottle lies in its maverick changeability, and the way one form follows on the heels of the last design. The bottle is caught in its own deception, because to keep up its allure, it needs to keep mutating. The bottle, by constantly recreating itself, offers the evidence that change is possible within the consumer as well.

In the art objects I have made, I have wanted to enthrall the viewer with plastic's little-known qualities. Barthes described plastic as more than a substance, it is "the very idea of infinite transformation".⁵³ Plastic, he believed, was impregnated with this wonder. Like Barthes, I feel plastic offers more than mere pretension. Since its invention, plastic has been delivered to the consumer as a one-dimensional medium, only exposing the ambivalent relationship between its function and its substance. At the mercy of the market driven economy, plastic may appear right

⁵² O, Wilde, printed in Cartland B., *Etiquette Handbook*, Hamlyn House, 1962. p. 67.

⁵³ Barthes, R., 1972, p. 93.

for a world of artifice and uncertainty, however it has many unresourced qualities that challenge these more conservative roles. Plastic never purported to any credentials of uniqueness or originality. Rather, advantage was taken of plastic's ability to be pressed and moulded, duplicated and assembled, whilst showing little resistance to the template of uniformity and production, proceeding forth in any scale imaginable (See illustration no. 18).

Plastic's ability to re-invent itself has allowed it to remain a medium, still of its time. However, plastic did suffer an ideological rejection by consumers after the 1960s. Instead of celebrating the democratic temperament of the medium, plastic's ability to promote it only as a copy became a source of its alienation. Roland Barthes believed that this rejection of plastic could be related to the evolution of myth surrounding imitation materials. These type of materials evoked pretension, a substitute for the "real thing".⁵⁴ Authenticity and originality supposedly won out over reproducibility and imitation.

⁵⁴ Barthes, R., 1972, p. 96.



Illustration no. 18 : Tupperware party in the 1960s

Plastic continues to offer a newness about itself, that responds to the moment and its situation. Whereas other media remain rigid in their application, plastic remains ever open to offers. Plastic captures the moment between a democratic aesthetic ideology and consumer common sense. Paola Antonelli referred to plastic as a medium,

displaying immutable examples of logical beauty and economical thinking, whilst preaching an ideally democratic world of objects that are all the same, all equally perfect and equally accessible. 55

Plastic's newness, its brilliance and its ability to capture and reflect light and at the same time be self-illuminating are unique features. Plastic has an amazing ability to hold odour within its matrix. The odours of the shampoo content impregnate themselves into its plastic bottle lining. I have capitalised on this occurrence, transferring and reinvesting in my art objects, the significance and associations of these "feminised" and "naturalised" odours.

Plastic has been considered ordinary and unexciting. It makes a dull thud when struck. It mainly presents in uniform primary colours and shades of white opacity. Yet once I started cutting up the empty shampoo bottles into shapes, strands and coloured mosaic patterns, fragments rearranged themselves into new formations. Text appeared like highlighted messages of new importance. Taken away from their original context, I saw new potential meanings, like snatches of transcript from our consumer souls.

55 Antonelli, P., *Plastics in the home : a revisitation*, *Domus* 776, November 1995.

Plastic, being the pliable and versatile medium that it is, offered little resistance to being exposed in this new light. Plastic lends itself as a metaphor; a reference to our times and to our understanding of it. As durable as human presence, if not quite as damaging, it is potentially as brilliant. From a collection of discarded effects, overlooked and temporarily without vocation, I wanted to transform the ubiquitous plastic shampoo bottle into something unique and unknown. Released from past utilitarian functions and connections with fashionability and taste.

In this instance, the word transformed could be re-read as tortured. In the two year period that I have examined this topic, I have scolded plastic shampoo bottles under boiling water, cut them up with blunt scissors, round and round till all I was left with was colourful strands of a wondrous fibre. I have stretched, pulled and decapitated hundreds of shampoo bottle lids.

Following the directions of an 1931 *Chemical Formulary Manual*, an indispensable text for all post-industrial revolution workers, and invaluable help from a fellow artist, Paul Rogers who understood measurement, I concocted a type of home-made plastic resin, incorporating horse-hoof glue, boiled shampoo and methyated spirits. I have felt like an alchemist.

In my piece *The Three Stepes* (1995) I re-appropriated religious iconographic depictions of women in contemporary advertising. I took text from plastic shampoo bottles and reinvested it into familiar iconographic forms. The words, Replenishing, Fortifying and Protective read as meditative psalms. (see illustration no. 19). Artificial light, passing through the plastic matrix, illuminates the text, like traditional stained glass. These forms represent the sense of belief consumers invest into objects, signifying celebration of the plastic world and all its possibilities. The icon offers homage to the commodity and its potential rewards. These forms make no effort to mask their artificiality: the text is sanctified plastic, offering reassurance and hope eternal to the viewing consumer.



See illustration no. 19: Close up of The Three Steps

Appendix no. 1.

Selection of letters from shampoo manufacturer's to my request for information.

RECKITT & COLMAN
PHARMACEUTICALS

REVLON
Revlon Manufacturing Ltd
Incorporated in Bermuda
Registered in New South Wales

CC
FC
Te
Te

2 WITHOUT PREJUDICE

9th April 1995

Ms Anna Phillips
c/- Art School
Hunter Street,
University of Tasmania
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Ms Phillips,

We refer to your letter requesting hair care advice.

Decore manufacture a complete range of shampoos and conditioners which are specially formulated for Normal and Dry Hair, Everyday Use and Extra Body. Our new Build-up Free shampoo removes excess residues and deposits from the hair whilst the conditioner will not contribute to build-up on the hair, particularly attributable to the frequent use of styling products. We also have our Decore Colour Care shampoo and conditioner for coloured and/or blonded hair and Decore Permasoft shampoo and conditioner for permed hair.

Vitamins and minerals such as B complex vitamins and iron are particularly important in invigorating lack-lustre hair. A healthy diet, exercise and general good health are all important factors in keeping your hair looking good as well as a good shampoo and conditioner.

We trust that you will find this information helpful.

Yours faithfully
DECORE ADVISORY BUREAU



Gillian Stairmand
CUSTOMER SERVICES OFFICER

22nd. May 1995

A. Phillips,
c/- Art School
Hunter St.
University of Tasmania
HOBART 7000

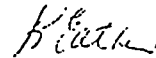
Dear Ms. Phillips,

Thank you for your inquiry regarding our Shampoo products.

We have enclosed some information which we trust you will find helpful in your research. Our shampoo and conditioner bottles are made of HDPE. The graphics are determined by our marketing department.

Again, thank you for taking the time to write to us regarding our products.

Yours faithfully,
REVLON MANUFACTURING LTD.



K. EATHER
Customer Service



R & C Products Pty Limited ACN 008 419 301
44 Wharf Road West Ryde NSW Australia PO Box 138 West Ryde NSW 2114
Telephone (02) 325 4000 Facsimile (02) 325 4044

287-301 Victoria Road Rydmore 2116 NSW Private Mail Bag 94, P.O. Rydmore, 2116

HEAD OF HAIR

O fleece, billowing even down the neck !
O locks ! O perfume charged with nonchalance !
What ecstasy ! To people our dark room
With memories that sleep within this mane,
I'll shake it like a kerchief in the air !

Languorous Asia, scorching Africa,
A whole world distant, vacant, nearly dead,
Lives in your depths, o forest of perfume !
While other spiritis sail on symphonies
Mine, my beloved, swims along your scent.

I will go down there, where the trees and men,
Both full of sap, swoon in the ardent heat;
Strong swelling tresses, carry me away !
Yours, sea of ebony, a dazzling dream
Of sails, of oarsmen, waving pennants, masts:

A sounding harbour where my soul can drink
From great floods subtle tones, perfumes and hues;
Where vessels gliding in the moire and gold
Open their wide arms to the glorious sky
Where purely trembles the eternal warmth.

I'll plunge my drunken head, dizzy with love
In this black sea where that one is confined;
My subtle soul that rolls in its caress
Will bring you back, o fertile indolence !
Infinite lulling, leisure steeped in balm !

Blue head of hair, tent of spread shadows, you
Give me the azure of the open sky;
In downy wisps aong your twisted locks
I'll gladly drug myself on mingled scents,
Essence of cocoa-oil, pitch and musk.

For ages ! always ! in your heavy mane
My hand will scatter ruby, sapphire, pearl
So you will never chill to my desire !
Are you not the oasis where I dream,
My drinking-gourd for memory's fine wine ?

Charles Baudilaire
from *The Flowers of Evil*
trans. & ed. J. McGowan: 1993

Appendix no. 3 Recipe Page

How to make your own "home-made" shampoo using triethanolamine lauryl sulphate.

Mix the surfactant with warm water. If the surfactant was applied straight to the hair, without dilution, it would carry away too many of the hairs natural oils, For dry hair use a 10% solution (ie, 10ml of triethanolamine lauryl sulphate to 90ml of water.)

R.G. Harry in *Modern Cosmetology* states that soap, used in soft water areas is an almost ideal cleaner for hair. Far better than the drying alkalinity mineral oils used in commercial shampoos.

He suggests that nothing beats simple soap or an egg to wash the hair in. Prolonged use of mineral oils detergents, as found in shampoo, dry the skin.

Alternatives to using shampoo can be found, I have include a recipe from Harry's *Cosmetology* which promises reliability and is completely safe for the hair. (see appendix 4)

Liquefy soap; soap scraps melted in a mug with hot water is perfect. This mixture will cool to a slippery slimey semi-liquid gel. Keep the mug covered, so to stop little flies diving in to the mixture. This semi liquid cannot catch shingles on the hair cuticle. Application to the head can be problematic, however. It will often slither out maddeningly through the fingers. Resulting in a scooping gesture, rather than pour.

Next, add a mild acid to the last rinse of the hair. The juice of half a lemon, or tablespoon of vinegar. The acid washes out the alkaline residues that will have formed if the water is hard and in any case it acts a gentle conditioner, smoothing out the hair cuticle.

and for oily hair use 50% strength (50ml to 50ml of water)

The shampoo that is made with this recipe will be very runny, it is at this stage in commercial production that salt is added to achieve the rich thick consistency that we are used to. You can increase the viscosity of the "home-made" shampoo by dissolving 5g of salt in the 90ml of water before adding the surfactant

Appendix no. 4.

HUMANS USING HORSE SHAMPOO

The following information came from interviews with representatives from two horse shampoo manufacturers - Rio Vista and Straight Arrow.

It has been reported in several newspapers that people are using horse shampoo with positive results. There are two main companies crossing over between horse and human hair care products.

The chemist behind Redken salon shampoo also has a horse ranch, so he decided to develop a line of horse shampoos named after his ranch Rio Vista. The horse shampoo has only been available for about two months here in Halifax so people are only beginning to use it on their own hair locally.

Street cents had these two products (Redken salon shampoo and Equine horse shampoo) chemically analyzed to see how similar the two products are - was the horse shampoo simply Redken repackaged? Results showed these two products to be significantly different.

Rio Vista products - including a shampoo, detangler, hair color shampoo, and hoof treatment - racked up over \$12 million in sales.

The other company is Straight Arrow. They produce horse care products, but are now developing specific products for humans because of the interest of the horse owner population.

Straight Arrow's major brand name is Mane N Tail. Currently in the USA they have a line of Mane N Tail for horses called Equine, and a line of human products called Equenne. The line of human products has been available in the USA for about 4 months.

The cross over from horses to humans appears to have been consumer-driven. Straight Arrow has been making horse care products for 24 years. Over the past 6 years the company began getting increasing queries from people about using the horse products on themselves. Huber said the sales staff covers 160 horse shows over the year and they were getting positive feedback from horse owners using the horse products on themselves and their whole family. Huber also said the customer services line in Pennsylvania was getting an average of 7 out of 10 calls in regards to people using the line of horse products on themselves - mainly shampoo and conditioner. Questions about watering the product down to the suggested mixture - they thought 2 ounces of product to 5 gallons of water was too much water. Over the past 3-4 years the horse products have been available to consumers through salons and grocery stores - sold to people as horse products.

We spoke to the Sales Manager with Rio Vista, makers of Equine shampoo. They figure about 90% of the horse shampoo is being sold to people for use on humans with a possible margin of error of 5-10%. Their rationale is logical but not scientific. When Jheri Redding began looking at the horse hair care business he had a research team do some preliminary work. The team figured out approximately how many horses there were in the USA. Based on this information and the cold spell we had in 93-94 they knew how many heated barns existed and knew people were not shampooing horses outdoors in the cold. So they ran these figures against sales figures and came up with about 90% of sales to people for people.

He also talked about the quality of the product, of course that it is comparable to salon products but different from Redding's salon shampoos like Nexxus and

Redken. It has the same cosmetic level ingredients that the salon shampoo have, versus industrial ingredients found in cheaper products. Redding is apparently known for his use of organic ingredients and they order ingredients from all over the world. Jheri Redding, 89 years old, started out as a cosmetologist (he's in the Cosmetology Hall of Fame).

List of Works included in Master of Fine Art exhibition submission.

1. **Quest**
1800(h)x1800(w)x200(d)
High Density Polyethylene, grout, linoleum, electrical wiring
2. **The Three Steps**
High Density Polyethylene
Linoleum, grout, electrical wiring
3. **Venus was her name**
1400(h)x970(w)x730(d)
High Density Polyethylene
grout, electrical wiring, nail varnish
4. **Milk and Blood**
1600(h)x1000(w)x730(d)
High Density Polyethylene
tile grout, nail varnish, electrical wiring
5. **My little ones**
High Density Polyethylene
cardboard, electrical wiring
6. **Deep Reconstructor**
High Density Polyethylene
electrical wiring, tile grout
7. **I wish, I wish**
350(h)x1600(w)x1600(d)
High Density Polyethylene
tile grout, solidified shampoo

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